

Seattle Public Utilities Food Recovery Program 2010 Final Report

- Mark Musick

Seattle Public Utilities initiated the SPU Food Recovery Program in 2006 to support increased diversion of edible food from the commercial waste stream. Initial steps included analyzing the quantity and sources of surplus food, identifying barriers to food waste reduction, and establishing relationships with local hunger agencies and the grocery and hospitality industries.

To support the recovery of increased amounts of edible food from the waste stream, program staff assisted local food banks and meal programs to establish a decentralized, city-wide food recovery network. SPU helped fund the Food Lifeline Seattle's Table program to recruit, train and equip Seattle hunger agencies and link them directly with donor businesses in their neighborhoods.

SPU staff also identified the lack of equipment to safely transport and store perishable food as one of the primary barriers to expanding food recovery in Seattle. In response, the utility initiated an infrastructure funding program to assist hunger agencies with transport, refrigeration and other equipment needed to build their capacity to accept increased donations of perishable foods.

Between 2006 and 2010, Seattle Public Utilities invested \$394,021 in funding for 19 hunger agencies to purchase equipment to safely transport, store and utilize donated food. Over a 10-year period, this investment is projected to divert 22,957 tons of edible food from the waste stream at a cost to the utility of \$29 per ton. At a disposal cost of \$53 per ton, the investments will generate an estimated \$1,216,721 in savings from avoided disposal costs for the utility. For a summary of grants awarded through the program, see Appendix 1.

Food Lifeline is the primary distributor to Seattle hunger agencies, and the utility provided the organization initial funding in 1998. SPU awarded the organization three additional rounds of funding through the Food Recovery Program, plus a Waste Prevention & Recycling Matching Grant. A summary of funding for Food Lifeline is provided in Appendix 2.

2010 Food Recovery Infrastructure Funding

In 2010 program staff coordinated one round of food recovery equipment funding. The announcement was released May 21, with a June 30 application deadline. Ten agencies inquired about the grants and a total of six submitted applications.

Reviewers representing SPU, Seattle Human Services, Seattle Office for Civil Rights, ShoreBank Pacific, and the Meals Partnership Coalition met on July 21 to evaluate the proposals and all six were approved for funding. Below is a brief description of each grant:

Bread of Life Mission: \$15,078 to purchase four 49-cubic foot commercial freezers to expand the mission's capacity to store recovered food. Projected 10-yr diversion: 288 tons.

Immanuel Community Services: \$3,710 for equipment and supplies to begin a breakfast and sack lunch program. Projected 10-yr diversion: 122 tons.

Puget Sound Labor Agency: \$3,586 to purchase a commercial refrigerator and six coolers to provide the capacity for their food bank to serve an additional 100 people per month. Projected 10-yr diversion: 95 tons.

Rainier Valley Food Bank: \$6,583 to purchase an electric pallet jack for their warehouse and a commercial refrigerator for distributing perishable products to food bank clients. Projected 10-yr diversion: 151 tons.

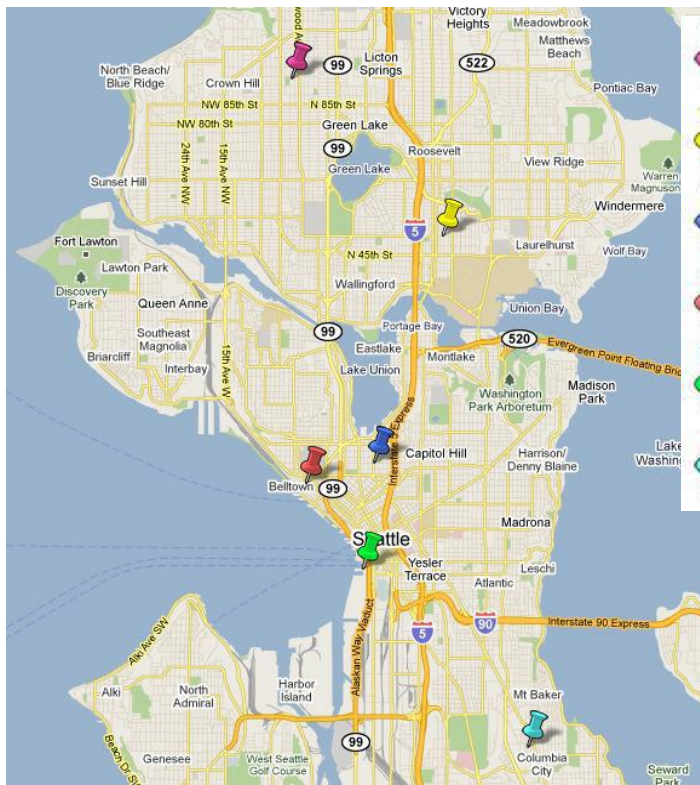
University District Food Bank: \$2,910 to purchase a reach-in freezer for the food bank and a scale for documenting food donations. Projected 10-yr diversion: 130 tons.

Volunteers of America Greenwood Food Bank: \$19,600 to refrigerate the food bank's van so the agency can recover a greater quantity and wider variety of foods. Projected 10-yr diversion: 400 tons.

A total of \$54,900 was awarded for grants in 2010, but the final requests for reimbursement came to \$51,467. The major difference was the University Food Bank. The reach-in freezer they specified in their grant application turned out to be too large to squeeze down the stairs and around the corner into their tiny basement food bank. As a result, they opted for smaller units that were less costly.

As the map below illustrates, the agencies funded in 2010 represented underserved populations in diverse locations throughout the Seattle, including Greenwood, the University District, Ballard, Downtown, and the Rainier Valley.

2010 SPU Food Recovery Infrastructure Grants Funded Agency Locations



Volunteers of America

9041 Greenwood Ave N, Seattle, WA 98103

University District Food Bank

1413 NE 50th St, Seattle, WA 98105

Immanuel Community Services

1215 Thomas St, Seattle, WA 98109

Puget Sound Labor Agency

2800 1st Ave, Seattle, WA 98121

Bread of Life Mission

97 S Main St, Seattle, WA 98104

Rainier Valley Food Bank

4205 Rainier Ave S, Seattle, WA 98118

Appendix 1

SPU Food Recovery Investments - 2006-2010							
Year	Agency	Project	Contract Amount	Projected 10 Yr Diversion - Added Tons	Value of 10-Yr Added Diversion	SPU Investment Per Ton	Report Sched
2006	Food Lifeline	Walk-in refrigerator / freezer	\$90,000	4,500	\$238,500	\$20	Annually through 2011
2007	Food Lifeline	Shoreline facility retrofit	\$75,000	4,400	\$233,200	\$17	Annually through 2014
2007	Downtown Food Bank	Refrigeration equipment	\$10,000	205	\$10,865	\$49	Qtrly through 2011
2008	Ballard Food Bank	Upgrade truck	\$9,908	275	\$14,575	\$36	Qtrly through 2010
2008	Food Lifeline	Food recovery equipment for Seattle's Table	\$14,998	NA	NA	NA	NA
2008	Food Lifeline	Waste Prevention & Recycling grant	\$14,159	NA	NA	NA	NA
2008	Genesis House	Refrigerator and freezer	\$6,057	76.5	\$4,055	\$79	Qtrly through 2010
2008	Hunger Intervention Program	Refrigerator, freezer, and food processing	\$13,459	185	\$9,805	\$73	Qtrly through 2010
2008	St Vincent de Paul	Walk-in cooler	\$10,000	3,900	\$206,700	\$3	Qtrly through 2010
2008	Union Gospel Mission	Refrigerated box truck	\$25,000	1,438	\$76,214	\$17	Qtrly through 2010
2009	Beacon Avenue Food Bank	Food transport & distribution equipment	\$1,553	90	\$4,770	\$17	Qtrly through 2011
2009	Community Lunch on Capitol Hill	Food storage and processing equipment	\$10,000	274	\$14,522	\$36	Qtrly through 2011
2009	Food Bank at St Mary's	Food recovery truck upgrade	\$7,108	934	\$49,502	\$8	Qtrly through 2011

2009	North Helpline	Refrigerated truck purchase	\$16,500	1,292	\$68,476	\$13	Qtrly through 2011
2009	Pike Market Senior Center	Refrigeration equipment repair	\$10,049	269	\$14,257	\$37	Qtrly through 2011
2009	St Vincent de Paul	Refrigerate box truck	\$15,664	1,761	\$93,333	\$9	Qtrly through 2011
2009	Union Gospel Mission	Purchase commercial freezers	\$13,099	2,171	\$115,063	\$6	Qtrly through 2011
2010	Bread of Life Mission	Purchase four freezers	\$15,078	288	\$15,264	\$52	Qtrly through 2012
2010	Immanuel Community Services	Upgrade kitchen equipment	\$3,710	122	\$6,466	\$30	Qtrly through 2012
2010	Puget Sound Labor Agency	Purchase refrigerator & coolers	\$3,586	95	\$5,035	\$38	Qtrly through 2012
2010	Rainier Valley Food Bank	Purchase elec pallet jack & refrigerator	\$6,583	151	\$8,003	\$44	Qtrly through 2012
2010	University District Food Bank	Purchase freezer & elec scale	\$2,910	130	\$6,890	\$22	Qtrly through 2012
2010	Volunteers of America - Greenwood Food Bank	Refrigerate food recovery van	\$19,600	400	\$21,200	\$49	Qtrly through 2012
Total			\$394,021	22,957	\$1,216,695	\$29	

Appendix 2

Seattle Public Utilities Food Recovery Program Grants to Food Lifeline, 1998-2008



Seattle Public Utilities initiated the Food Recovery Program to assist local hunger agencies with increasing their capacity to transport, store and utilize food donated by Seattle businesses that would have otherwise been disposed in the landfill. Investments in the city's food rescue network started with an initial grant to Food Lifeline in 1998 which demonstrated the beneficial impacts both on reduced waste disposal costs and on feeding the increasing number of hungry people in our community.

In the 10-year period from 1998 through 2008, SPU awarded five grants to Food Lifeline totaling \$274,000. The funds were used to purchase trucks and refrigeration equipment, to upgrade their Volunteer Repack Center, and to expand their Seattle's Table food recovery network. Two of the grants included a combined total of \$7,300 for staff time to document and report on the tonnage of food recovered by Food Lifeline. The various contracts had different reporting period, but food recovery reporting for the 2006 and 2008 contracts extended through December 31, 2011.

Below is a summary of the funds awarded to Food Lifeline between 1998 and 2008:

1998: \$80,000

Capital Expenditures to Increase Food Bank Distribution

SPU funded food preparation equipment, fencing for supply storage, and the purchase of three refrigerated trucks: a double-axel semi tractor and 48' trailer, a 14' box truck, and an extended cargo van. The trucks more than tripled Food Lifeline's capacity to pick up and distribute food.

2006: \$90,000

Refrigeration Equipment for Seattle Distribution Center

SPU provided \$85,000 for partial funding of a 4,200 sq ft walk-in refrigerator and 4,200 sq ft walk-in freezer for Food Lifeline's Seattle Distribution Center warehouse located at 4011 6th Ave S. In addition, the contract included \$5,000 for Food Lifeline staff to document the type and tonnage of food recovered within the Seattle city limits, and maintain a log from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2011.

2007: \$75,000

Purchase Equipment for Volunteer Repack Center

SPU provided \$67,695 for equipment to outfit Food Lifeline's Volunteer Repack Center at their

Shoreline facility. The new equipment enabled Food Lifeline volunteers to process increased donations of bulk foods. In addition, the contract included \$2,305 for Food Lifeline staff to document the tonnage of food recovered within the Seattle city limits, and maintain a log from January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2009.

2008: \$14,998

Food Recovery Equipment for Seattle's Table

SPU provided funding to assist the Food Lifeline Seattle's Table program with purchasing equipment to enable participating meal programs to safely transport and store food recovered from restaurants and other food service providers. Tallies of new food diversion were to be reported semi-annually through December 31, 2011.

2008: \$14,150

Seattle's Table Partner Network Expansion

Food Lifeline was awarded an SPU Waste Prevention & Recycling Matching Grant to provide the capacity to expand its Seattle's Table partner program. Goals included increasing the number of participating meal programs from 12 to 18 and increasing the number of food donors from 24 to 70. The new partner agencies were provided with training and equipment to safely recover, transport and store donated food. The contract called for food recovery reporting through May, 2009. During the six-month time period for project, Seattle's Table partners increased their food recovery rate three-fold, from 6 to 18 tons.